



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BIKE WALK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

*Online & 2 Lincoln St
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, March 12th
2026, 7:00 PM*

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MEMBERS PRESENT: John O'Brien, Chair; Russ Miller-Johnson, Vice-Chair; David Achee; Daniel Liguori

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Giguere, City Planner; Chris Yuen, Community Development Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Briana Cronin, Bryan Davis, Steve Eustis, Jack Evans, Christine Forde, Eliana Fox, Finn Hamilton, Brooke Lundrigan, Nick Meyer, John O'Brien, Alyssa Smith,

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

J. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

None.

3. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

a. February 12th, 2026

DAVID ACHEE made a motion, seconded by RUSS MILLER-JOHNSON, to approve the minutes of February 12, 2026. Motion passed 5-0.

4. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**

S. Eustis said that the southern Wilkinson Drive/Tyler Drive intersection is not safe. He believes that a rapid reflective flashing beacon (RRFB) would assist with pedestrian safety. He thinks that the proposed bulb out would make the situation less safe. M. Giguere encouraged S. Eustis to contact the City of Essex Junction to have this area added to the Traffic Calming Policy. This will not guarantee that changes will be made to this area, however it will be reviewed. He said that the BWAC can only afford one RRFB per year, however they will add this intersection to the list of areas that they will consider. N. Meyer encouraged the BWAC to focus on walkability. He spoke of concerns regarding snow removal on sidewalks. He said that Essex Junction has a large population who enjoys walking and that this should be a community priority. N. Meyer is the Chair of the Tree Advisory Committee and said that he hopes that the two committees can work together to best utilize greenspace. S. Eustis discussed uneven sidewalks and the need for improved drainage. J. O'Brien said that said that he would be happy to have a joint meeting with the Tree Advisory Committee.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

a. Pearl Street Pedestrian Crossing - Draft Alternatives Presentation

C. Yuen provided an overview of the work that has been done on Pearl Street over the past several years. He said that this evening's meeting will focus on the section of Pearl Street between West Street Extension and Susie Wilson Road. The City would like to further develop this area and has contracted with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and Hoyle Tanner to assist. A. Smith and B. Cronin, both of Hoyle Tanner, presented. A. Smith said that this is a brainstorming session to get public input on the project. She said that this is intended to assess the possibility of a crosswalk on Pearl Street west of the Champlain Valley Exposition (CVE). There are currently no crosswalks between CVE and West Street Extension. A. Smith said that this meeting combines both the purpose & need and local concerns meeting. She provided an overview of the existing traffic conditions, crash data, and pedestrian counts. She discussed the survey results regarding pedestrian activities on Pearl Street. She said that speeding traffic and difficulty in finding a gap to cross were two of the largest concerns cited by pedestrians. A crosswalk in this area does not meet VTrans

standards outright due to slightly lower than necessary pedestrian counts.

Alternative 1 is the no-build alternative. Alternative 2 is a crosswalk at Willeys Court. The curbs will need to be dropped so that they are ADA compliant, and an RRFB will be installed. Alternative 3 is also a crosswalk at Willeys Court, but with a median in the middle of the road. This allows pedestrians to only cross one lane of traffic at a time. Alternative 4 is a crosswalk and RRFB at Complex 159. Alternative 5 is a crosswalk and RRFB at Complex 159, with a median in the middle.

E. Fox, of the CCRPC, said that it would be helpful to receive guidance from the BWAC of a proposed alternative, or combination of alternatives. A. Smith said that a possible crossing across the rail tracks near the dog park could be included with one of the alternatives. The timing of the RRFBs is roadway specific. Winter maintenance concerns were brought up when discussing the roadway median. D. Liguori noted that the roadway is very wide, and that the median may assist with pedestrian safety. He also supported the idea of having another RRFB in the median. R. Chawla said that this crosswalk has been consistently requested by the community. He said that a median is needed to assist with seniors crossing successfully. If there is no median, then the speed limit should be reduced to 25. He also said that opening additional gates could allow for better traffic movement at the fairgrounds. He believes that this crosswalk would meet the VTrans guidelines if traffic counts were taken at commuting times.

J. O'Brien said that there are other gates for fair traffic to be routed through and said that there are also a lot of people walking during fair times. He also agreed that a median should be included. B. Cronin said that studies have shown that pedestrians will take risky behavior if they need to wait more than 20 seconds to cross. She said that, with the wait times, the intersection would be poorly rated. Thus, there is justification for installing a crosswalk beyond the pedestrian counts. C. Yuen said that there had been instances where pedestrians were waiting more than 90 seconds to cross. J. Evans, of Local Motion, said that the median with RRFB is a better solution for those who need extra time to cross. He noted that speeding is the main concern expressed in the survey and said that narrowing the lane could assist with reducing this. Answering a question from R. Miller-Johnson, A. Smith said that both sides of the road will flash if the RRFB is pressed.

C. Yuen encouraged the BWAC to prioritize Willey's Court over Complex 159. This is because it would provide additional connectivity and be more consistent with Essex Junction's long-term planning. All agreed that this would be a better location for transit and accessibility. Thus, the BWAC chose the option of a crosswalk at Willey's Court (Alternative 3) with a median as the top option.

b. Park Street Complete Streets Improvements

M. Giguere said that the City is beginning the initial scoping and public engagement process. A project page is now on the City's website, with explanations of each alternative. Direct business outreach has begun. The BWAC will be hosting the public meeting next month on April 13, 2026. M. Giguere said that he has also reached out to Williston on the Move to inform them of this project. F. Hamilton expressed support for this project and said that it will encourage biking and remove a gap in the bicycle network. He also thinks that it will be helpful for students. M. Giguere said that posters are available for distribution and that direct business outreach is important. Answering a question from N. Meyer, C. Yuen said that the Planning Commission and City Council will be engaged in this process.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES

The Trustees' Policy on BWAC will be discussed in May, rather than at the April meeting.

7. STAFF UPDATES

a. Amtrak Station Improvements

C. Yuen provided an update on the Amtrak station project. The City received a federal grant and is currently reviewing the terms to ensure compliance. He is unsure if changes to Ivy Lane regarding biking accessibility

will be made as a part of this project.

b. Pearl Street West

M. Giguere said that Hamlin Engineering is conducting the design work for this project. The eastbound and westbound lanes will be narrowed to make room for the bus stop crossing. It is hoped to complete this project at the same time as utility work for cost savings.

c. Vermont Walk/Bike Summit

The Vermont Walk/Bike Summit will take place in Bennington on May 8th, 2026. M. Giguere will be presenting on Essex Junction's bike map.

8. **ADJOURN**

DAVID ACHEE made a motion, seconded by RUSS MILLER-JOHNSON, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.